

application should be provided, as applicable.

(xi) **Verification of Adequate Resources.** Present a budget to support the work plan showing sources and uses of funds during the start up period prior to the start of operations and for the first year of full operations. Present a copy of a bank statement evidencing sources of funds equal to amounts required in excess of the grant requested, or, in the alternative, a copy of confirmed funding commitments from credible sources such that USDA is satisfied that the Center has adequate resources to complete a full year of operation. Include information sufficient to facilitate verification by USDA of all representations.

(xii) **Certification of Adequate Resources** Applicants must certify that non-Federal funds identified in the budget pursuant to paragraph (c)(5)(xi) of this section will be available and funded commensurately with grant funds.

§ 4284.1011 Evaluation screening.

The Agency will conduct an initial screening of all proposals to determine whether the applicant is eligible and whether the application is complete and sufficiently responsive to the requirements set forth in the applicable RFP so as to allow for an informed review. Incomplete or non-responsive applications will not be evaluated further, and may be returned to the applicant. Applicants may revise their applications and re-submit them prior to the published deadline if there is sufficient time to do so.

§ 4284.1012 Evaluation process.

(a) Applications will be evaluated by qualified reviewers appointed by the Agency.

(b) After all proposals have been evaluated using the evaluation criteria and scored in accordance with the point allocation specified in the applicable RFP, Agency officials will present to the Administrator of RBS a list of all applications in rank order, together with funding level recommendations.

(c) The Administrator reserves the right to award additional points, as specified in the applicable RFP, to accomplish agency objectives (e.g., to en-

sure geographic distribution, put emphasis on a specific commodity, or to accomplish presidential initiatives.) The maximum number of points that can be added to an application under this paragraph cannot exceed ten percent of the total points the application originally scored.

(d) After giving effect to the Administrator's point awards, applications will be funded in rank order until all available funds have been obligated.

§ 4284.1013 Evaluation criteria and weights.

Unless supplemented in a RFP, the criteria listed in this section will be used to evaluate grants under this subpart. The distribution of points to be awarded per criterion will be identified in the applicable RFP.

(a) *Ability to Deliver.* The application will be evaluated as to whether it evidences unique abilities to deliver Producer Services so as to create sustainable Value-Added ventures. Abilities that are transferable to a wide range of agricultural Value-Added commodities are preferred over highly specialized skills. Strong skills must be accompanied by a credible and thoughtful plan.

(b) *Successful Track Record.* The applicant's track record in achieving Value-Added successes.

(c) *Work Plan/Budget.* The work plan will be reviewed for detailed actions and an accompanying timetable for implementing the proposal. Clear, logical, realistic and efficient plans will result in a higher score. Budgets will be reviewed for completeness and the strength of non-Federal funding commitments.

(d) *Qualifications of personnel.* Proposals will be reviewed for whether the key personnel who are to be responsible for performing the proposed tasks have the necessary qualifications and whether they have a track record of performing activities similar to those being proposed. If a consultant or others are to be hired, points may be awarded for consultants only if the proposal includes evidence of their availability and commitment as well. Proposals using in-house employees with strong track records in innovative activities will receive higher points